

Recent meetings

The 2001/2 season ended with a visit from the Hereford club and the AGM (at which we also had a display of Bernie's illustrated envelopes from the Art Cover Exchange).

The new season kicked off in September with the usual "new acquisitions" evening. Two weeks later, your secretary displayed the post and postal history of the Faroe Islands. A last minute change to the programme resulted in us bringing forward "members' interests (on the historic night on which Wales beat Italy 2-1 at the Millennium Stadium). This was followed two weeks later by a two-hander with displays of GB redirected mail marking and covers from Germany.

The first of the visits to other clubs was to Cardiff, four of our members displaying (Czeslaw Slania, Fiji, airships and Gibraltar).

Stamp fairs

Chris Doble's fairs are at the Jury's Hotel in Cardiff on the first Friday of each month (the final one in 2002 is on 6 December).

The Cardiff Stamp Fairs at the City Hall are now run by AMP Fairs (the final one in 2002 is 7 December).

Anne Scott continues her Bristol postcard fairs at the BAWA centre. The next fair is on 7 December. Provisional dates early in 2003 are 1 February and 29 March.

Federation News

The Autumn Day in Swansea proved to be the usual enjoyable occasion, with the chance to pick up some bargains and sell surplus items. Thanks go to Buster Shimmen for organising this. The Autumn Day in 2003 will be held in Barry (date to be confirmed)

The annual convention will be at the usual venue (Princess Royal Theatre, Port Talbot) on 19 April 2003.

The South Wales Federation has not yet been able to rearrange the second part of the judging seminar. Watch this space.

The Federation has confirmed the visit to South Wales by Pat Grimwood-Taylor of Cavendish Auctions. Pat has been invited by the Federation to talk about Social Philately on 8 May 2003 (location to be confirmed).

Newport area postmarks

A short article in the South Wales Argus on 5 September under the headline "PO to reopen", stated that "Mathern, near Chepstow, sees its Post Office reopen on Saturday after 18 months. The Post Office, a new shop and community park, were achieved after residents won funding from Consignia and the county council".

Here is the postmark used on the opening day (7 September 2002). The postmark is new but modelled on a design from the 1960's. Mathern is one of two new post offices in the area: the other is at Redbrook.



Royal Mail issued a lovely set of pillar box designs on stamps on 8 October 2002. There is no philatelic counter in Newport and on a visit to the post office in Bridge Street on the Saturday prior to the issue date, I was confronted by a queue of people buying lottery tickets. The conversation from the person in front of me was intriguing (as I am one of the few who has never bought a ticket). The lady wanted four lottery tickets but was told she could only have three. "That's an odd number" she replied (of course four would have been an even number!).

When I asked about special postal facilities for the new stamps. I was faced with a blank look - a post office providing postal services - now that would be odd. I wanted the special hand stamps for the Letter Box Study Group, of which we are members, and Bishops Caundle, close to where a friend lives.

A search of the Consignia (now Royal Mail) web site provided an indication that hand-stamps could be obtained but no more information. I had the Mount Pleasant address from a couple of years ago and decided to try that. Returning to the post office on the Tuesday, I purchased the stamps (beautiful designs by Czeslaw Slania). I then asked for one to be given the local first day cancellation. This apparently involved the post office staff sending the covers to Cardiff. A couple of days later, the cover returned ... with a beautiful Bishop's Caundle hand stamp (no more Gwent first day cancels).

Meanwhile, I put stamps on two further envelopes, labelled them and put them in an envelope addressed to Mount Pleasant with the postmarks requested listed on the outside of the envelope. Two days later they dropped through the letter box protected by sealed see-through pockets with the postmarks the wrong way round. Still, a LBSG cover with a Bishops Caundle postmark should be quite uncommon as will a Bishops Caundle cover with a LBSG postmark.

As a footnote, special postmarks can be ordered from:

The Special Handstamp Centre

Royal Mail

Mount Pleasant

Farringdon Road

LONDON EC1 1BB

Covers and postcards must be enclosed in an outer envelope and sent to the Centre. The outer cover must be marked "special Postmark" and ideally the reference number should be supplied. Postage on the outer cover must be fully paid. Items must be posted on or before the date that will be shown on the postmark: the also applies to first day covers.

On 16 July 2002, stamps were celebrated on the front page of the South Wales Argus. Gwent sports star, triathlete Anneliese Heard, unveiled the set of stamps for the Manchester Commonwealth Games. This was appropriate as the stamps included swimming, cycling and track. Could this be classed as another issue with a Gwent connection?

Odds and ends

I have updated the list of members' interests. I will make it available to the Federation and to dealers, without members' names. Copies with members' names will be available at club meetings.

The club received an invitation to visit Heidenheim in October but it was not possible to arrange. Next year, however, sees the 90th anniversary of the Heidenheim club. There will once again be a meeting in October, which I have already put into my diary.

The club has, after many years, joined the Newport/ Heidenheim Twinning Association. This should help us to be more active in our twinning arrangements with the German club.

There was success for our member Dennis Martin in the Gibraltar Study Circle annual competition in St. Annes-on-Sea in September. Dennis won the Queen Elizabeth II class With In defence of the Rock and was second in the miscellaneous class with The history of the Postal Stationery Postcard 1866 --1968, winning also the Novice class. Congratulations!

Computer world

Here are some interesting links

In my opinion, the best auction site Ebay (auctions): <http://pages.ebay.com>

The best way to find sites of interest: <http://www.execpc.com/~joeluft>

The UK philately site: <http://www.ukphilately.org.uk>

Art Cover Exchange: <http://ww.geocities.com/artcoverexchange>

Czeslaw Slania site (see the GB pillar box issue): <http://slaniastamps.school.dk>

Faroe Islands Study Circle: <http://www.faroeislandssc.org.uk/>

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